

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 381

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, IT, BE

SUBJECT: TINDEMANS ON ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

REF: ROME 359, STATE 6720, STATE 7807

SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF "ROUTINE" DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS' CHEF DE CABINET WE CONVEYED TO HIM OUR DISTRESS OVER GENEROUS REMARKS TINDEMANS MADE IN FRENCH RADIO INTERVIEW RE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. GRAULS SAID TINDEMANS WAS CAUGHT OFF BALANCE BY RADIO INTERVIEWER BUT DID NOT REPUDIATE UNITA QUOTES. WE EXPLAINED WHY USG REGARDS SUCH ININTENDED AID TO PCI AS UNFORTUNATE. END SUMMARY.

1. PURSUANT TO INSTRUCTION (STATE 6720), WE CALLED ON TINDEMANS CHEF DE CABINET (GRAULS) JANUARY 14 TO DISCUSS VARIETY OF SUBJECTS. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION ON TINDEMANS WISE-MAN REPORT OPPORTUNITY AROSE TO BRING UP HIS COMMENTS ON PCI.

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2. WE REMARKED THAT IT WAS INTERESTING THAT PCI WAS ATTEMPTING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE TINDEMANS REPORT TO ADVANCE ITS CAMPAIGN FOR POLITICAL RESPECTABILITY. GRAULS WAS VERY AWARE OF WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT. HE SAID PRIME MINISTER HAD AGREED TO FRENCH RADIO INTERVIEW JOINTLY WITH MICHEL DEBRE WITH EXPLICIT UNDERSTANDING IT WAS TO BE A PRO-AND-CON ON SUBSTANCE OF HIS REPORT. GRAULS SAID MIDWAY IN DISCUSSION A QUESTION "CAME OUT OF NOWHERE" REGARDING ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. HE SAID TINDEMANS WAS CAUGHT OFF BALANCE AND MADE SOME PERFUNCTORY REMARKS, RECALLING HIS CONSTRUCTIVE TALK WITH BERLINGUER LAST AUTUMN. GRAULS CONVEYED IMPRESSION THAT UNITA KITED TINDEMANS' REMARKS BUT DID NOT CONTEST ANY SPECIFIC QUOTE.

3. WE COMMENTED THAT WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST LEADERS, IN PURSUING CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO CONVINCE PUBLIC THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED SUDDEN CONVERSION ON ROAD TO DAMASCUS, ARE SHOWING THEMSELVES TO BE SHREWD AND RUTHLESS IN EXPLOITING OPPORTUNITIES. GRAULS COMMENTED THAT ITALIAN COMMUNISTS WERE NOT BEHAVING AS RESPONSIBLE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, GIVING ITALIANS SUPERIOR GOVERNMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL COMPARED TO INEFFECTUAL DC-LED LOCAL COALITIONS.

4. THIS LED TO DISCUSSION OF GENERAL RESPECTABILITY CAMPAIGN OF WEST EUROPEAN CPS WHEREIN WE DREW ON ROME 359 AND STATE 7807. WE STRESSED THAT THIS PHENOMENON WAS A MAJOR CURRENT CONCERN OF USG WITH POTENTIALLY SERIOUS IMPACT, IF CPS SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING EUROPEAN DEMOCRATS OF THEIR NEWFOUND VIRTUE, ON US POLICY RE EUROPE. GRAULS CONCLUDED DISCUSSION OF TOPIC BY COMMENTING THAT COMMUNISTS HAD OF COURSE ALWAYS BEEN UNTRUSTWORTHY OPPORTUNISTS.

5. COMMENT: IT WAS EVIDENT THAT TINDEMANS HAD ALREADY FELT QUEASY ABOUT HIS GENEROUS COMMENTS ON PCI. GRAULS HAS BY NOW TOLD HIM USG SPOTTED HIS REMARKS AND DOES NOT LIKE THEM ONE BIT. WE ARE CONFIDENT HE DELIVERED AT LEAST A SUMMARY OF OUR EXPLANATION WHY. FIRESTONE

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